

CITYSTYLE



Atlantic Insight

September 1985

**Tina's Halifax:
new hot spot on
the big-name circuit**

Halifax at centre stage

Metro used to be the boondocks for rock and country stars. Tina Turner's spectacular July concert showed how much things have changed

by Lorri Neilsen

Nancy MacInnis and Dave Dumaresq came because they "wanted to see a real professional, one who doesn't treat us like Hicktown, Nova Scotia." Twelve-year-old Jay Gilmore brought his parents to his first rock concert because he wanted them to see "the best singer in North America." A middle-aged couple was matter-of-fact: "We go to all the concerts, and we couldn't miss this one. This woman has done a lot for herself."

They came to see Tina — fans as young as six and as wise as 73, sporting cameras, binoculars, lamé skirts, Madonna merry widows, suits, baggy cotton pants, and plenty of smiles. The floor is a bowl of light. A steady stream of fans circles the walkway. The heavy drums, bass guitar, and solid lead singer of Strange Advance, the warm-up group, are revving up the audience. Outside the bowl, the T-shirts are selling like popcorn. The buzz throughout the building is steady. People can't seem to sit still.

Behind the stage, the roadies and the groupies, the writers and the photographers hover over the entrance as though waiting for lift-off. Out of the dark, a streak of wild red hair and tight white jeans is steered up the ramp. The lights go down and the roar goes up.

Tina Turner, all hair, legs, and raw-energy-with-a-devil's-grin, hits centre stage. In a sudden rush, 10,000 Halifax fans are on their feet. Reserved, polite Halifax, the staid city by the sea, the end of the circuit for rock's might-bes and has-beens, has just lifted off the ground. With this rock n' roll legend on stage and others soon to come, Halifax has arrived.

"Are you ready for me?" Tina yells. The crowd is wild. "Because," and she grins a long slow grin, "because I'm ready for you."

Ready we are.

The best on centre stage. It hasn't always been that way for Halifax, or



Tina Turner in Halifax: wild red hair, tight white jeans and raw energy

for Tina Turner herself. Like Halifax, Tina Turner is just now coming into her own.

The 46-year-old dynamo, born Anna Mae Bullock in Nutbush, Tennessee in 1939, has been singing for over 25 years. Given the name of the jungle queen Tina, she joined Ike Turner's band, The Kings of Rhythm, in 1958. Those of us who remember Ike and Tina remember best the opening to their raunchy version of the Creedence Clearwater Revival hit *Proud Mary*: "We nevah do nothin' nice . . . and easy . . . We do it nice . . . and rough."

Tina Turner never had it nice and easy. During the years that she toured with Ike through Britain, Europe and the U.S. "chitlin' circuit" she raised their four children, two of whom were Ike's, one hers, and one theirs together. Centre stage in the Ike and Tina Review, she was hell-fire on high heels, dancing, strutting, pouting, belting out rhythm and blues night after night. Her raspy, earthy voice with its distinctive choppy cadence always had the power to lather up an audience like a crowd at a gospel tent show (Moncton fans who preferred Tina over Mother Teresa had such faith).

Tina was centre stage with many in the rock industry as well, including Phil "wall-of-sound" Spector, who considered Tina's "River Deep and

Mountain High" (Ike's contribution was name-only) to be the masterpiece of his career as a music producer.

But Tina took backstage with Ike in their 16-year marriage. He beat her regularly, gave her no say in the music, the tours, or the record deals, and demanded that she do his hair, nails, and feet every morning when he woke up. A cocaine abuser, Ike carried guns with him, and regularly moved his mistresses into the Turner home.

In 1976, Tina left with 36 cents and a Mobil credit card. In the divorce settlement she gave him everything — royalties, property, master tapes — in order to be free.

Two events turned her career around. Taking on Australian Roger Davies as manager in 1980 ("I trusted this young man; he believed in me") and singing lead on the English pop band Heaven 17's version of *Ball of Confusion* took her off the backwater, white-belt-and-white-shoes hotel lounge circuit and into a recording studio. Davies' talented friends, including Mark Knopfler, Terry Britten and Jeff Beck, donated time and music for the two-week miracle album *Private Dancer*, recorded in Britain.

And now, two American Music Awards and three Grammys later, Anne Mae Bullock is in full flight, perhaps the most popular female singer in the world, a woman who turned down Spielberg's movie offer because,

as she told a TV interviewer, "doing *The Color Purple* would be like going back to Ike. That was me ten years ago. That's not me now."

Tina's not going back to the way it was, and neither is Halifax. Ten years ago, we didn't draw rock legends to the city. And now, we can have Tina Turner centre stage at the Metro Centre for two consecutive nights, a promoter's coup that even central Canada couldn't top. How did this happen?

"It's simple," says Barry Kent, Atlantic representative for Capital records. "Our day has come. Halifax is big enough, worthy enough, and supportive enough. And Donald knew we were ready."

"We are becoming a very sophisticated town," agrees Barry Horne, program director for radio station C-100. "We want all the same things as other major cities, and it's taken us this long to be willing to pay for them. Probably Donald was the only one who was willing to take the risk."

Donald?

In the Canadian music industry, the only Donald is Donald K. Donald, an easy-going, salty-voiced rock genie with a big laugh, bigger ideas, and business sense that makes both heads and records spin. A promoter since 1967, his magic lamp has lit the way for many Canadian groups including Corey Hart, April Wine, Triumph, and Strange Advance, the Vancouver-based opening act for Tina's Canadian dates. In Canadian rock music, Donald K. Donald makes it happen.

And now it's happening in Halifax. "You're a big league city now," says Donald. "And you want major league entertainment. You're willing to pay the going rate. It all comes down to economics."

For years, the conventional wisdom has been that Halifax is an isolated market. Major entertainers whose acts often cost in the seven-figure range to take on the road have bypassed Halifax because they lose money coming here. Being where we are geographically, major acts have to take one day off before performing here, and one day off afterward.

"Touring is so expensive," says Donald, "that Halifax loses major acts all the time. I nearly booked Julio Iglesias for Halifax, but it simply cost too much. And ticket prices can't cover the cost."

If we couldn't afford Julio Iglesias, then how could we afford Tina Turner, the hottest rock act of 1985?

"Well," says Donald, "we had to be creative. Fifteen years ago when the Hollies were touring Canada, I met Roger Davies, who is now Tina's manager. I tried to be as friendly and helpful as I could be — and he remembered. Several months ago, we

held some strategy sessions.

"Tina Turner is opening her 105-date, 90-city tour in Atlantic Canada because we provided the show with everything they needed to get the tour off the ground. We got the St. John's Memorial Stadium for a week of rehearsals at the end of June, four dates in St. John's to get the show geared up and get the technical bugs ironed out, smaller shows in Moncton and Fredericton while we were in the area, and one date in Halifax before playing Montreal. The Atlantic Canada dates were like exhibition games. It was a mammoth undertaking, a big risk, but we wanted to try."

Exhibition games, you say? More sloppy seconds for the East Coast?

"Not at all," says Donald. "I knew the response would be good, but not this good." When the 10,000 seats for the July 17 concert sold out in a day, C-100 arranged a phone-in request line to test the public demand for a second show. It brought in over 10,000 calls, the number of people required to fill the Metro Centre.

Barry Horne of C-100 credits Donald with educating the Halifax market. "Two years ago, Donald brought in Stevie Wonder. People in Halifax had to realize that with good acts come higher ticket prices. He did not treat Halifax like the rock n' roll boondocks — he gave us high calibre entertainment."

Donald himself credits Trade Centre Ltd., the corporation of which the Metro Centre is part. "It's a great venue for concerts," he says, "and the executive leadership, aggressive marketing, and good production capabilities make the Metro Centre a viable drawing card for these acts."

But over the last two years, Halifax has drawn more well-known rock and country acts than Haligonian fans can tap their toes to. Do we owe it all to Donald and the Metro Centre?

"I don't want to get too philosophical here," says Donald in his rapid-fire delivery, "but there are a whole lot of things happening nowadays. Over the last ten years or so mass communication has brought us concerts on television, MTV (all-music pay TV), other video programs, more popular magazines, more up-to-date FM radio stations — it all combines to educate the market, to make people want to have some of this excitement come to their town."

An avid concert fan known only as the Crazy Dutchman has his own opinion. He says that Maritimers returning from away have caused this excitement. "People got out of town and realized what they were missing here. So when they came back, they demanded it. As fans, we're getting better," he says. "But we still have to loosen up. If we don't show more of

this new-found enthusiasm, the big name acts won't come back."

Those who work the shows say that Halifax fans have always been quiet. And Donald agrees that we're not exactly out of control. "Years ago," he says, "people didn't know a standing ovation was standard at a rock concert. They didn't know that all performers have three songs in their back pocket for encores. But all that's changing now."

"There is no question we are becoming an enthusiastic audience," agrees Greg Cox (a.k.a. Greg Edwards, head of promotions at CJCJ/C-100). "We have always been reserved, known in the rock industry as a walk-up town, one whose population expects to be able to buy tickets for an event at the door. But now people approach me regularly with concert requests. And now we have overnight lineups and sell-outs in a single day."

We have lineups, we have sell-outs, we had Tina Turner for two days. We also had Corey Hart, Bryan Adams, Foreigner, April Wine, Willie Nelson, Ricky Scaggs, Triumph, Kenny Rogers, and soon, we'll have Dire Straits, whose lead vocalist Mark Knopfler penned Tina Turner's title track *Private Dancer*.

The crowd has been on its feet for most of the 90-minute, 16-song flight (complete with video). And now, in the third encore (you were right, Donald), as Tina belts out one for Bruce, they are all dancing in the dark. *Proud Mary* (does it ever make her think about where she's been), *Legs* (Z.Z. Top's can't compare, especially for strutting on a platform), *Let's Dance* (the rose from a fan bedecking her jean jacket) have kept every hand held high, and every foot moving. It ain't gospel, but it sure feels like salvation.

In a blinding flash of light from the stage and a sudden roar from the crowd, Tina disappears. Back stage, two bodyguards wrap her in a huge towel-coat and she is outside before the band hits the last note.

"The best show I've ever seen," says a teenager with lacquered hair. "I loved it," says a middle-aged man.

"I've worked as the concessionaire here since 1976," says Steve Pottie, "and I have never seen anyone get a Halifax crowd on its feet like she has. Never."

What about the new generation of Halifax fans? What about someone like Jay Gilmore, for whom the Tina Turner show was the first rock concert ever? "Good," says Jay in the understated tone only a 12-year-old or a Haligonian can produce. "It was good." "Well," responds Jay's mother, "I thought she was superb." Good show, Tina. Good show, Halifax. **C**

Italian food Atlantic style

Italian cooking is not all cast in rigid tradition. It's alive and adaptable. Chef Ivano Zambotti tells of using local fish in the classical recipes

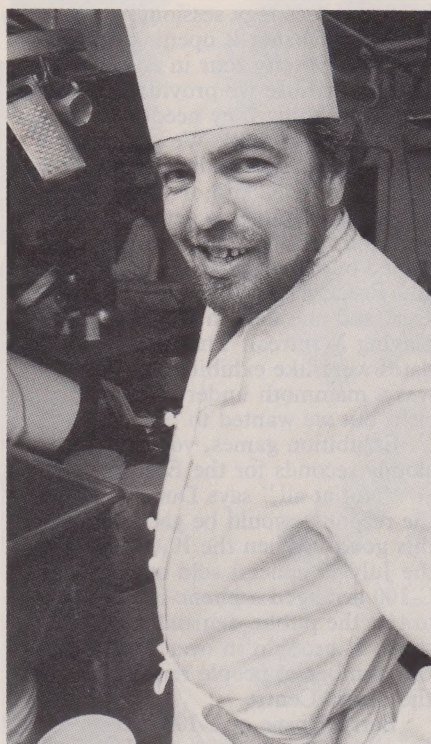
by Susan MacPhee

The idea of Italian cookery being confined to pasta, meat and tomatoes is definitely passé. As North American consumers become more sophisticated and knowledgeable about international cuisine, the clichés that have been attached to ethnic cookery disappear. Not many closet gourmets still labor under the illusion that Italian specialties are limited to spaghetti and meatballs.

Italian-born Ivano Zambotti, executive chef at the Upper Deck restaurant at Privateers' Warehouse, is a living example of the diversity to be found in Italian cooking. His specialty is fish. And why not? As Zambotti puts it, "Italy has the Adriatic Sea to the east, the Mediterranean to the south, the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west, and many lakes and streams throughout the country." It only makes sense.

Zambotti grew up in Venice and found himself in a kitchen immediately after high school, "cleaning chickens, fish and everything else." His father had "some connections in Switzerland" and managed to get Ivano in school there. Ivano returned to northern Italy for part of his apprenticeship, serving first at the ski resort Madonna di Campiglio in the Italian Alps, and then at a resort on Lake Garda, a bit further south.

In 1967, back in Switzerland, he was given the opportunity to accompany his master chef and two others to Canada to work in the Swiss pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal. He stayed on for two years, again at a resort, this time at Chateau Montebello in the Laurentian Mountains of Quebec where he met and married his Ottawa-born wife, Carol Laing.



Zambotti: a kitchen scherzetto

By 1971 it was time to take up the challenge he had decided on when cleaning those chickens and fish in Venice. "My goal was to be a chef in Europe . . . it is much easier to become a chef here than over there. I became a chef here, but I wanted to go back and prove to myself that I could be a chef there." And that's what he did, returning to Italy to a hotel on a small island just south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. He had fulfilled his ambition to be accepted as a chef in Europe.

In 1982, Zambotti and his family settled in Nova Scotia. He worked at the Pines resort in Digby from 1982 until a year ago when he became executive chef at the Upper Deck.

Many of the types of fish Zambotti was accustomed to preparing in Italy are not available in North America, except as frozen imports, and he prefers to work with fresh fish. Freezing, he says, "corrodes" fish, "makes the meat not firm. There is no life to it . . . the flavor goes and the consistency of the meat is not the same. Of course the best is fresh." To overcome this problem, Zambotti often substitutes North Atlantic fish for those not available fresh — using halibut, haddock, salmon, sea trout, perch and red snapper.

Some of the chef's favorite recipes follow — ones that he would ordinarily prepare in his own kitchen.

Calamari or Seppie (Squid or Octopus)

This is a warm salad. For one serv-

ing, use approximately 8 ounces of squid. To prepare the squid, first separate the body sac from it. Wash the sac well with cool water. Take the tentacles and remove the ink bag. Wash the tentacles. Blanch the body sac and tentacles in boiling salt water for approximately eight minutes, no more than ten, and strain. Slice and put them in serving bowl. Toss with two tablespoons each of olive oil and lemon juice, half a tablespoon of finely minced garlic and salt and pepper to taste.

Zambotti says octopus can be used in this recipe as well but it must be tenderized. It must be pounded hard with a mallet, he says. "You must bang it like you would steak or scallopini."

Another appetizer Zambotti says is popular in Italy is one that Nova Scotians tend to think of as a French dish — escargots. "First you have to catch them," he says. And indeed, the right type of snail for gourmet cooking can be found in the Annapolis Valley, though they are so small that you would need very many for a single serving. Zambotti imports his from France. Here is a classical Italian preparation:

Escargots and Polenta

Boil the escargots in water until tender, then combine with minced shallots, white wine, minced garlic and bordelaise sauce and braise them in a hot oven for 40 minutes. Serve them on a base of Polenta.

Bordelaise Sauce

½ cup dry red wine
1 cup brown sauce
½ teaspoon lemon juice
2 tbs. minced shallots
¼ cup diced beef marrow
½ teaspoon minced parsley
salt and pepper to taste
1 tbs. cornstarch

Combine shallots and red wine in saucepan; reduce by half. Combine cornstarch with brown sauce and pour into wine mixture; stir, simmering, for 3 or 4 minutes until it starts to thicken. Fold in the beef marrow, which should first be softened in hot water, and then add the seasonings.

Polenta

1 cup cornmeal
1 tsp. salt
½ cup cold water
4 cups boiling water

Stir together the cornmeal, salt and water. Put boiling water in top of double boiler, and gradually stir in the cornmeal mixture, and stir over boiling water until thick, about half an hour. Serves four.

Even main courses don't have to be

complicated to be delicious. Zambotti says that whitefish in cream is a lovely dish, and it takes less than 15 minutes to prepare from start to table. Simply take a slice of whitefish fillet — any locally available groundfish (cod, haddock, sole, etc.) — place it in a pan, pour cream over it, salt and pepper to taste and bake it in a 425° oven for ten minutes at the very most, closer to two minutes for anything as delicate as sole.

But if you want a challenge, Zambotti has this suggestion: his Maritime Scherzetto (fillet of salmon or halibut with fresh noodles and shrimp). This recipe will serve six.

Maritime Scherzetto

16 oz. green fettuccine
 ½ carrot, thinly sliced
 2 tbs. cognac
 salt and pepper
 24 oz. fillet of salmon or halibut
 1 oz. unshelled shrimp
 ¼ onion, chopped
 1 pint cream
 hollandaise sauce

Make the fresh noodles or buy them ready-made. Melt the butter in a heavy base pan, add the shrimp and sauté them for about 5 minutes or until the shells begin to turn red. Add the carrot and onion and cook over low heat, stirring often, until soft but not brown. Add the cognac and flame briefly, stir in half the cream, season with salt and pepper and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove the shrimp and shell them, reserving the shell. Pound the shells in a mortar with a pestle or in a bowl with a bottle. Return them to the cooking liquid and simmer for another two minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a saucepan and boil, if necessary, to reduce to a syrupy consistency. The shrimp may be cooked up to one day ahead and kept in the refrigerator.

Fold the fish fillets (butterfly cut) in half crosswise and put them in a buttered ovenproof dish. Pour over the remaining cream. Heat the oven to 425°. A short time before serving, cook the fillets in the heated oven for 10 minutes or until they just turn opaque.

Meanwhile, cook the noodles in a large pot of boiling salted water and drain thoroughly. Drain the fish, reserving the liquid and keep warm. Add the shrimp reduction to the cooking liquid and boil them together until slightly thickened and of a syrupy consistency. Whisk in the hollandaise sauce and stir in the shrimps. Taste for seasoning, adjust if necessary and keep warm in a water bath.

To serve: arrange a bed of noodles on a serving dish, top with the fish fillets and spoon the shrimp sauce over it. **c**

CITYSTYLE

GADABOUT

ART GALLERIES

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. to Sept. 15 — *The Dynamics of Tony Toscana: Works on Aluminum*, sculptural relief, organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Sept. 5-Dec. 8 — Second Floor Gallery: *Prints and Drawings from the Permanent Collection*. Sept. 19-Nov. 17 — Main and Mezzanine Galleries: *From Different Starting Points: 150 Years of Art in the AGNS Collection*, selected by guest curator Dr. Jean Weir. *Permanent Collection*, works donated by the Art Sales and Rental Society.

Anna Leonowens Gallery (N.S. College of Art and Design) Sept. 10-28 — Gallery I: *Avatar '85*, a juried exhibition of contemporary crafts, organized by the Nova Scotia Designer Craftsmen to coincide with the Canadian Crafts Council Conference. Gallery II and III: *NSCAD Craft Division Exhibition*, ceramics, jewelry and textiles in conjunction with the Canadian Crafts Council Conference.

Mount Saint Vincent Gallery. Sept. 19-Oct. 13 — *Diverse Perspectives*, a selection of work by 37 members of the Slide Registry of Nova Scotia

Women Artists, in celebration of its 10th Anniversary and the United Nations Decade for Women. **Saint Mary's University Art Gallery.** Sept. 4-Oct. 19 — *3D - K002 Show*, sculpture from New Brunswick.

EVENTS

Sept. 13-15 — **Atlantic Food Fair**, Dartmouth Sportsplex.

Sept. 19-22 — **Joe Howe Festival:** preceded by the Oratorical Contest open to all metro area high school students, on the subject "Joe Howe Re-visits Halifax for a Day." The Festival opens Thursday at noon at the Grand Parade followed by a concert and that evening a fashion show of Nova Scotia clothing designers. Friday there are events at the Grand Parade and a Monte Carlo Casino night.

Saturday is scheduled for horseshoe competitions, lawn bowling, a soap box derby and beer fest at the Metro Centre. The Festival ends Sunday with a service at the Old Dutch Church, a tour of the Public Gardens and bicycle races at the Commons.

Sept. 20-22 — **Ideal Home Show**, Dartmouth Sportsplex.

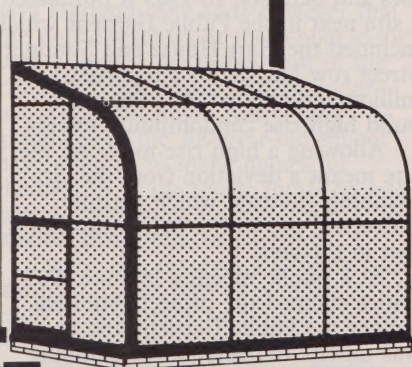
Sept. 22 — **Burnside Corporate Challenge:** a test of the physical abilities of the employees of Burnside companies, sponsored by Dartmouth Parks and Recreation and Burnside Industrial Park. **c**



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Lessons of a demolition

Early this summer Halifax residents were shocked by the demolition of the Hart House and five Victorian row houses on Summer Street by developers seeking to clear the air for approval of a high-rise condominium tower on their site.

Later, developers were given the go-ahead by city council for their \$25 million, 21-storey Summer Gardens project, pending final permission from the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs and a contract agreement with city council. One stipulation by council is that the building not cast shadows on the Public Gardens from Feb. 21 to Oct. 21 each year.

Regardless of the final details, the fact remains that the city lost more of its dwindling treasure trove of Victorian buildings. On the credit side, planning is more clearly understood by citizens and will certainly be an issue in October's municipal election. "If council won't plan, plan to change council" reads a button sold by the group which fought to prevent more high rise development near the Public Gardens.

Events leading up to this act of licensed vandalism are hard to unravel because of the many conflicting interests and factions involved. There are accusations of collusion between former owners Dalhousie University and developers United Equities and dark mutterings that officialdom had been unduly influenced.

United Equities is an investment company belonging to 120 Halifax doctors and dentists. In 1983 it purchased a site next to the Public Gardens which included the Hart House and Summer Street row houses for a reported \$2.5 million and applied for permission to build high rise condominium towers.

Allowing a high rise tower on the site meant a deviation from the city's planning strategy, which permits university use with a height limit of 45 feet in the area.

At a public meeting in June 1983 critics claimed the project could endanger the Public Gardens and that it was unwise to overrule the planning strategy to suit a single developer. From this meeting grew the "Friends of the Public Gardens" who opposed more high rise development close to

the Gardens because of possible ill effects from wind and shadows and sought to preserve what was left of the Victorian streetscapes near the Gardens.

In the dirty two-year battle that raged until the houses were finally demolished, United Equities had no trouble discrediting the Friends, accusing them of inconsistency because they changed their tactics to suit changing events. Their sometimes melodramatic PR events brought accusations of emotionalism and their well-meant pestering of city officials backfired. A 12,000-signature petition was ignored because it had been signed by thousands of non-residents. Even the word "friends" acquired unfortunate connotations.

United Equities offered to sell Hart House to the Friends for \$1 and move it to College Street, on condition all objections to the development cease. The Friends wouldn't accept this condition and were later accused by United Equities of causing the demolition of Hart House.

Bad PR was not confined to the Friends. United Equities are seen by many as a bunch of rich people aiming to become richer at the expense of the city's heritage. They refused to reduce the height of their project despite a June 1985 recommendation by city advisers against high rise development and a study by city staff which made it clear low or medium rise development could be both attractive and economic. "The Planning Advisory Committee is just another body of opinion and we certainly do not find their recommendations acceptable," said United Equities chief executive Keith Allen.

City aldermen were lobbied by both sides. The two whose wards were directly affected fought manfully to restrain the developers and prevent major changes to what they saw as an excellent city plan. Most of the others began by favoring the development, seeing the \$600,000 it would generate in taxes each year as a vital contribution to the city's over-stretched budget.

Conservationists who fought to save Hart House and the row houses pointed out that Halifax's charm lies not in its burgeoning glass and concrete towers but in the tree-lined

streets that remain from its Victorian past. Those opposed to more high rise development on Spring Garden Road saw breaking the planning strategy as leading to towers all round the Gardens.

The city accepted studies commissioned by United Equities as proving wind and shadow effects were negligible. The focus then shifted to retention of Hart House and the row houses as a period setting for the Gardens and the question of the hour was whether the houses qualified as heritage properties. They weren't registered as such because the city's cumbersome process hadn't yet reached them. When officially assessed the row houses easily made heritage stature, but Hart House fell one point short because its builder, lumber merchant Havelock Hart, was considered of local not provincial importance. Further research raised his stock and the house was rated. Registration was recommended to council, but turned down on the grounds it couldn't take place once a development application had been received.

Legal objections out of the way, United Equities ignored requests to wait until the appeal process was completed. Despite a genuine groundswell of public opinion, they moved fast to defuse the situation by demolishing the buildings.

But demolition backfired. With Hart House gone, a nearby high rise became clearly visible from the Public Gardens and the planning battle came into sharper focus. Shocked by the wanton destruction of the houses many new people entered the fray at the meetings and hearings that followed. It became obvious that Halifax must speed up its assessment of potential heritage buildings and bring in stronger protection measures to prevent further confrontations.

The Hart House and the Summer Street row houses have been sacrificed, but perhaps they will bequeath the city a new set of aldermen more aware of the importance of a careful compromise between development and conservation. The October elections will tell the tale. **C**

Anne West is a Halifax freelance journalist.



DAVID THOMPSON

Dance class: part of a hectic pace

Frantic leisure after school

Lessons in music, ballet or art, sports and group activities are an investment in time and effort as well as dollars. Is it worth it to the kids?

by Alexa Thompson

Do you know where your children are after school? The question need not evoke sinister scenarios. You probably know exactly where they are — with lots of other children in mime classes, hockey camps, dance lessons or any of dozens of other after-school programs. There are also Saturday classes, Christmas camps and March Break camps. It's become a small industry. To some, it's not a question of where the kids are, but why parents are putting them through these programs so relentlessly.

There are swimming lessons, computer classes, basketball schools, skating, hockey, soccer, tennis, gymnastics, dance, art, music, photography, French, horseback riding and skiing — not to mention Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. And everyone is getting in on the act, including the City of Halifax Recreation Department, the continuing education division of the Halifax School Board, universities, private schools, schools of music and a multitude of private and public organizations. The YMCA offers summer camps in French and history for the child whose parents want to combine an education with summer fun. Dalhousie University even offers a summer mini university where children as young as ten can sample collegiate life in such courses as law, physics, dentistry, biology and water safety.

The pace sometimes appears frantic as children are shuffled from one set of lessons to another by parents who double as chauffeurs. Karen Wallin of the Halifax Dance Association talks of children arriving for an hour's dance class with hair still damp from a swimming lesson. Carol Smeraldo, director of the Halifax School of Pottery reports similar experiences with children having difficulty fitting in art classes between gymnastics and ballet.

Why the punishing pace? Why are parents so intent on immersing their children in these activities? Do they see a Wayne Gretzky or a Karen Kain behind those toothless grins?

Dr. Ron Cosper of the sociology department at Saint Mary's University, an expert on leisure time activities, sees it as part of the urban middle class ethos. Pressing children into leisure activities "is a kind of hurry-up notion that time is short," he says. "It reflects a middle class attitude that life must be scheduled and we are teaching this concept to our kids . . . Leisure is something we don't leave to chance any more."

The element of upward social striving is there too, he adds. Parents enrol their children in what they consider to be upper middle class activities such as ballet, classical music or art in an attempt to confirm their social standing and that of their children.

If parents want to avoid the mistake of starting their children too young or pushing them into too many activities, what should they look for? One good indicator is the youngster, say the people who run these activities. If a child is restless during a game, or

always reluctant to go to class, this may well be a sign that he or she is not yet ready for that activity. Parents should talk to activity directors at centres which offer programs for children, and to other parents.

Phyllis Evans, who teaches music to young children, suggests that parents look very closely at the needs of their children and the investment both in terms of costs and time. Fees can be as inexpensive as \$3 for an afternoon workshop on music or playing with clay at Woozles bookstore on Birmingham Street, or as expensive as \$200 or more a term for private music lessons — even higher if an instrument must first be purchased.

Evans, who teaches the Orff method of percussion instrumentation, says that parents often don't look carefully at what they are paying for when enrolling their kids in music classes.

Sharon Harland, manager of the Maritime Conservatory of Music, concurs. Too often parents enrol their children in classes without thoroughly checking the teachers' credentials. The Conservatory, now housed at the Sacred Heart School, has highly qualified teachers of both music and dance. They accept children into their programs as young as four, but Harland says her telephone rings almost daily with mothers asking what is available for two year olds.

Music classes are expensive and begin at \$192 per term, but the children are taught on an individual basis, which the director, Professor Klaro Mizerit, believes is the best method. Dance lessons are less expensive at \$35 to \$40 a term, but classes are larger. The Conservatory now has 600 students, most of whom are enrolled in music classes.

Music lessons take their toll on parents. Not only is the financial investment substantial, but they must make a commitment of time. Practice must be supervised and "if parents don't encourage a child, he or she will not progress with their instrument," says Harland. She adds however that the music teachers at the school instil such a love of the instrument in the child that practice is usually undertaken without much fuss. Many graduates of the 100-year-old school have gone on to make names for themselves in the music industry, and several have come back to teach at the school, either full- or part-time.

Dance also involves a definite commitment on the part of parents. As the child progresses more time is needed for practice and to attend performances. The Halifax Dance Association offers programs for recreation and for the serious dancer through its junior professional program for children ages nine and up. Young

children can enrol in creative movement classes at three or pre-ballet at five. Fees range from \$33 a session for half-hour lessons to about \$50 a session for hour-long classes. There is also a \$10 registration fee.

Karen Wallin expresses concern at the number of children trying to juggle dance classes with other activities, but says that by the time students reach the junior professional level they have decided for themselves that dance is for them.

Carol Smeraldo of the Halifax School of Pottery offers more than a creative arts, after school babysitting service. Her courses for children in pottery and creative arts take over

where the schools leave off and offer students a chance to use their imaginations creatively. Pottery for children aged six to 14 lets the students throw themselves into clay.

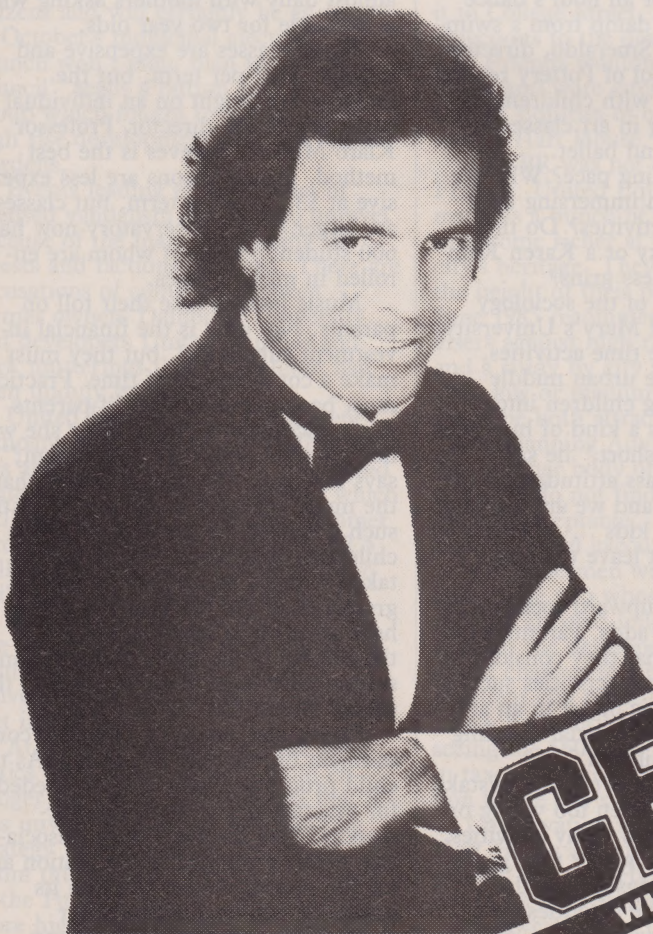
"Clay is a wonderful material for kids," she says. "You can attack it, get right into it. Children just love to make squishy things with clay. Sometimes, when I watch them work, I can see the whole story going on in their heads."

Older students, aged ten to 12, can take a creative arts program, a combination of pottery, painting and drawing. At this age, she finds children are discouraged with school art classes as they become very self-conscious about

realism and concerned about their own skills. Smeraldo helps them develop those skills through observation. Those engaged in pottery at this age quickly become adept at using the potter's wheel and working on their own. She finds it gratifying to watch their progress. Her classes run about \$85 a term, including the costs of materials.

Creative arts, dance, music — there are lessons for all ages and all pocket books offered through both private and public organizations. There are also pitfalls. Family resources and commitments can easily become over-extended. Whatever they do for the children, after-school leisure activities can be a strain on the parents. **C**

WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON ?



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ALABAMA
WILLIE NELSON
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CFDR 68
WHERE VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE.